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History of airpower: massacre from the air.

From the moment that men realized their age-old dream of flying above the earth—in hot-air balloons or heavier-than-air planes—some of them dreamed ~~and~~ <sup>anew</sup> of dropping things on the heads of people below, killing some and terrifying others.

[ Earliest examples]

Terrifying people on the ground was for a long time more practical than killing them. Distance from the targets, the motion of the flying machines, vagaries of winds between the vehicle and the ground, all hard to estimate and changing continuously, made it all but impossible to hit a particular person with a lethal object or small explosive, or even a particular type of person (soldier, rebel, bandit).

Pistol-fire or small hand-held bombs were more likely to fall on plots of ground unoccupied by humans, or to wound or kill people not traditionally thought of as suitable objects of military attack: mothers, children, bystanders. Even so, these victims, and others subject to near-misses, tended to be related to combatants or of concern to them or their leaders, so <sup>that</sup> terrifying them by essentially random destruction was hoped to have a useful political effect.

EXAMPLES] (balloons; colonies; WWI, Britain, Germany, dirigibles. Stalemated ground warfare; panic caused in cities.)

The special attraction of threatening and killing people from the air was that, in the early stages, the targets could not hit back. The fliers not only experienced the godlike powers of leaping over mountains, rivers and deserts but could entertain the fantasy of hurling thunderbolts from the heavens, immune from retaliation.

[attractions for two types of war: great-power conflicts; and colonial subjugation. Latter: Yemen, northwest territories of India (still: drone country!), Nicaragua, Libya. Former: necessity of striking first, achieving “air superiority”; then, either terror bombing (Douhet, Mitchell) or “precision bombing” against war-supporting resources.